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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/987,024	11/13/2001	Stephen Paul Green	XA-9584	6599

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EXAMINER

VAN PELT, BRADLEY J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3682

DATE MAILED: 02/06/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/987,024

Applicant(s)

GREEN ET AL.

Examiner

Bradley J Van Pelt

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 1.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the rake and reach adjustable mechanism must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: (4A), Figs. 1-3. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the

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invention. It is not clear or understood as to how the assembly is rake adjustable or reach adjustable.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Asayama et al. (EP 0 718 172 A1).

Asayama et al. disclose a steering column assembly for a vehicle, including an upper column assembly (14), a lower column assembly (13) and a central collapsible steering column (12) passing through the upper and lower column assemblies; there being a central bearing comprising a cylindrical tube (11) that surrounds said central collapsible steering column, that is slidably mounted in said upper column assembly and that rotatably supports said central collapsible steering column at its lower end (see pg. 10 lines 18-49).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asayama et al. (EP 0 718 172 A1) in view of Connel et al. (USPN 3,788,148).

Asayama et al. disclose all of the instantly claimed invention, except, the central bearing is a plastics material or a thermoplastics material.

Connel et al. show a collapsible steering column with central bearing (40) made of a thermoplastic material (see column 4, lines 26-32).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the bearing apparatus of Asayama et al. with a plastic or thermoplastics material for the purpose of reducing friction in the bearing.

9. Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asayama et al. (EP 0 718 172 A1).

Asayama et al. disclose all of the instantly claimed invention, except, the central bearing is a molded glass fiber-filled thermoplastics tube or a molded carbon-fiber-filler thermoplastics tube.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to use molded glass fiber-filled thermoplastics or molded carbon-fiber-filler thermoplastics to form the bearing tube, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Farrel (USPN 3,590,655), Bongers et al. (USPN 4,465,301), Beauch et al. (USPN 4,867,003), Browne (USPN 4,886,295), Castellon (USPN 5,813,794), Bresse (6,015,350).


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11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is (703)305-8176.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on (703)308-3668. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)746-9391 for regular communications and (703)305-3597 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-2168.

BJVP 
February 4, 2003


DAVID A. BUCCI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600